

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5931, legislation prohibiting future ransom payments to Iran.

In the midst of a global war on terror, it should be common sense that the United States of America should not be sending untraceable pallets of cash on an airplane to the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Apparently it isn't, though, because that is exactly what happened and what this administration engaged in.

We know now that \$1.7 billion in cash was given to Iran in exchange for the release of prisoners, violating America's longstanding policy against ransom payments.

Predictably, this administration has admitted that it cannot guarantee that this money did not go to fund current or future terrorism by Iran. In addition, all of this was done in secret, lacking transparency with the American people.

Today the House is taking action to end this practice. H.R. 5931 prohibits any cash payments to Iran regardless of the rationale or reasoning behind it. It also ensures the American people will be notified if a President ever attempts this sort of deal again.

America cannot be a country that sends cash to countries that fund terrorism. Period.

RECOGNIZING LOWE'S HEROES IN SYKESVILLE, JEFFERSON COUNTY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of a group of men and women from the Fifth Congressional District of Pennsylvania who recently volunteered their time and talents to help improve their community.

Lowe's Heroes is a companywide volunteer program for Lowe's that gives employees a chance to volunteer for local community improvement projects. In return, Lowe's provides the material and manpower to make those projects happen.

Just last week, men and women from the DuBois Lowe's store volunteered to help build a centerpiece for a town square project in Sykesville, a community only a handful of miles away from the store's location.

This is a long-awaited project in the community to transform a vacant lot into a beautiful park for community events and a place for people from across the community to gather.

In addition to the contributions of the Lowe's Heroes, the store is also donating the decorative and structural blocks for the town square's centerpiece, along with lighting for the area.

These men and women represent the best of what small towns across the United States represent. I commend them for their selfless efforts.

□ 1230

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5931, PROHIBITING FUTURE RANSOM PAYMENTS TO IRAN ACT, AND WAIVING A REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(A) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS REPORTED FROM THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the House Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 879 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 879

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5931) to provide for the prohibition on cash payments to the Government of Iran, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Foreign Affairs now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114-64. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. The requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported through the legislative day of September 27, 2016, relating to a measure making or continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 879 allows for the consideration of H.R. 5931, the Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act. The rule makes in order all five amendments submitted to the Rules Committee. The rule also provides authority for the House to expeditiously consider a continuing resolution.

On June 24, 2015, President Obama stood in the Roosevelt Room of the White House and said: "I am reaffirming that the United States Government will not make concessions, such as paying ransom, to terrorist groups holding American hostages."

This position shouldn't have been surprising. It has long been the position of the U.S. Government to not pay ransoms to terrorist organizations, for doing so only encourages further kidnappings and puts more American lives at risk.

Despite this reassurance from President Obama, on January 17, 2016, an unmarked cargo plane landed at a European airport. On this plane were wooden pallets stacked with unmarked foreign currency—\$400 million worth, to be exact.

Who was waiting at the airport to accept this money? The Islamic Republic of Iran.

On that exact same day, several Americans who had been held prisoner in Iran were released. That, Mr. Speaker, is a ransom payment.

Since then, we have learned that the full U.S. payment to Iran totaled \$1.7 billion. The money was related to a decades-old dispute about an Iranian arms sale. There are a lot of concerning issues at play here.

First, by giving money to Iran, the United States is supporting the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Iran uses their money and resources to support groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and other radical terrorist groups in Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Iran is no friend of the United States, and their efforts have resulted in the deaths of U.S. citizens and servicemembers. So why in the world is the United States sending them cash payments in the first place?

Second, the United States should never pay a ransom. I know they claim